

Seriously

MFA Thesis Exhibition 2009
February 7th - February 28th

Austin Furtak-Cole

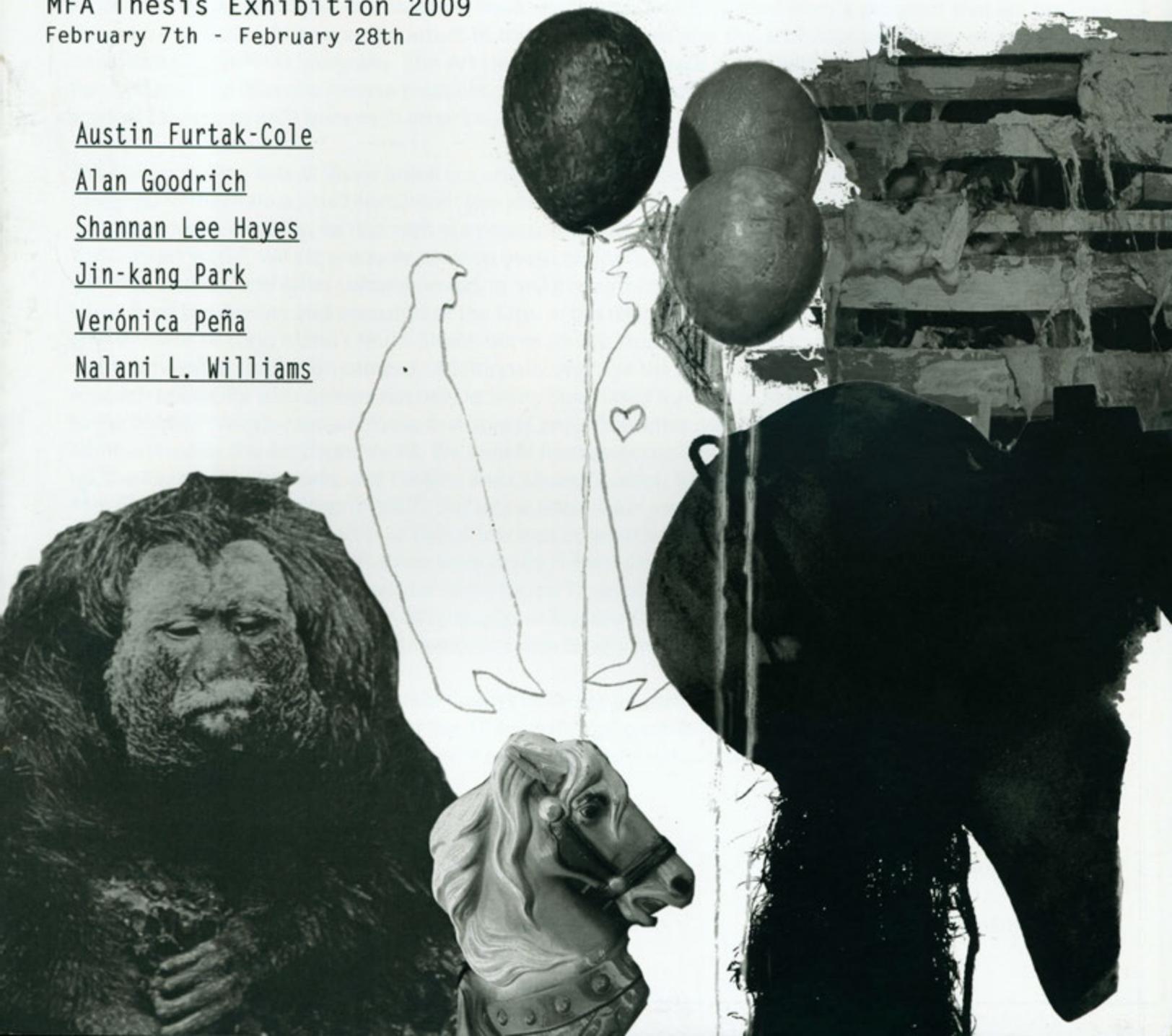
Alan Goodrich

Shannan Lee Hayes

Jin-kang Park

Verónica Peña

Nalani L. Williams





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INTRODUCTION

This year marks the 21st anniversary of the MFA Thesis Exhibition and the 24th year since the MFA program was established at Stony Brook. The program has attracted top students from all over the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Asia. Our students have sought out and benefited from a program that encourages dynamic interaction between the artists in the MFA program and the art historians/critics enrolled in the department's MA/Ph.D. program. The Art Department is unusual in providing this type of close collaboration between traditionally diverse practices. Nowhere else are advanced studio and art history and criticism students able to benefit from each other's courses and ideas.

The Master of Fine Arts at Stony Brook is a unique three-year, sixty-hour terminal professional degree that is designed to maintain a small enrollment (we allow no more than twenty candidates in residence) and to encourage considerable interaction with our professional faculty and their many important contacts in the New York City art world. We are uniquely situated geographically, close enough to NYC and its fabulous museums, galleries, studios, and other cultural venues to make recurrent visits easy, yet sufficiently distant to enjoy insulation from the density and pressures of the City. In the relative peace provided by the suburban, even rural, environment of Long Island's North Shore, our graduate students are able to focus on their work in their recently renovated studios on campus. Additionally, we have the advantage of being part of a large, renowned research university with centers not only in Stony Brook itself but also in Manhattan and Southampton, close to the historic Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center (the latter now housed on the Southampton campus), administered by the Art Department. We benefit from associate faculty in Philosophy, History, Women's Studies, the Humanities Institute, and Cinema and Cultural Studies. We are also part of the Consortium for Digital Arts, Culture and Technology (cDACT). Faculty in these areas are readily available to our MFA candidates, who are required to take nine credits of liberal arts and to write a thesis in connection with their one-person exhibitions in the MFA Gallery. Students have profited from material, practical, and intellectual assistance from other, even unrelated, departments at Stony Brook: They have blown glass with the chemists, studied metallurgy with the engineers, done theatre design in Theatre Arts, studied computer science with that department, optics in Physics, anatomical illustration with faculty from the medical school, and so on.

University Art Gallery Director Rhonda Cooper deserves a heartfelt thanks for her energy, competence, efficiency, and design sense in staging these often challenging exhibitions by our graduating MFA students. The success of our students is readily apparent in the 2009 MFA exhibition, and we are proud of each and every one of them.

Anita Moskowitz
Chair
Department of Art

Austin Furtak-Cole



Tough Love, 2009 Oil on canvas, 82" x 64"



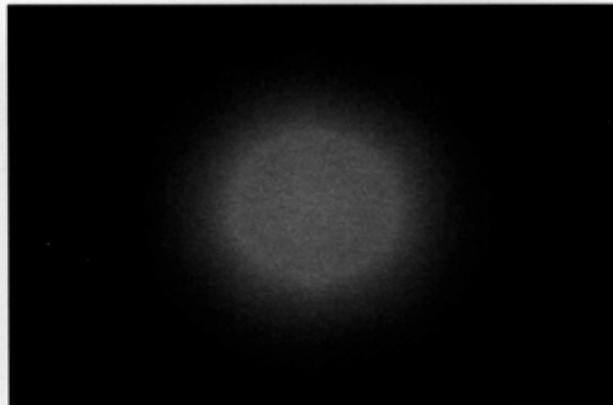
Cradled, 2009 Oil on canvas, 82" x 64"

We struggle through life with the burden of having to constantly negotiate what we feel and think within the constraints of what exists. I do this in my day-to-day life and as I work through my paintings. My work explores the conflicts that inevitably occur within our interactive human experience. I'm interested in how we cope with and develop through our life experience. The contradiction found in attempting to capture something ephemeral in painting acts as a physical and metaphorical way of exploring and enacting the uncertainty of life.

Alan Goodrich



That's Entertainment, 2008 DV, 10 min.



That Obscure Object of Desire, 2008 DV, 30 min.

"Take ecstasy with me, baby..." - The Magnetic Fields

Ecstasy, n.

1. The state of being 'beside oneself,' thrown into a frenzy or a stupor, with anxiety, astonishment, fear, or passion.
2. A name for the synthetic hallucinogen 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine.

Ancient forms of mysticism relied on extended and intensified perceptual experiences to achieve self (and hence universal) understanding. Modern forms of mysticism rely on speed and collision to achieve similar ends.

Artist, n.

1. An inscrutable person.
2. One with a God complex.

Shannan Lee Hayes s.l.A



And Smell the Roses, 2009 Papier-mâché & acrylic



Hot Air, 2008 Beeswax & ribbon

"Like many people like me, I have learned to mimic social behavior well enough to get along. I work, have friends and social relationships...but the real issue comes when things get beyond superficial. When the very coping mechanisms that get us through surface interactions not only fail, but cause additional problems." - blogger Lynne Soraya

My recent work has focused on the relationship between language and emotion in the cultural surface of social exchange. In particular I am interested in the liminal states of failure, coping and doubt, and the possibility of learning to empathize.

Jin-kang Park

I am interested in human networks, interactive art and the strangeness which is hard to explain with language. My ideas come from within myself and from my memories. The work itself becomes a sort of self-examination. I am always curious if it is possible to be at the same time a good person and a good artist. Indeed, is it possible to achieve love and success simultaneously? These are simple, maybe childish questions, but I could never find a satisfactory answer. If somebody asks me, "so what's your work about?" then I would say it is about sweetness and sadness.



Beings, 2008 Installation



Children's Riding Machine, 2008 Video, 2 min.

Verónica Peña



Each Time I See Tables, 2009 Performance installation



Each Time I See Tables (detail), 2009
Performance installation

He comes to visit me when I cannot see him.

I saw a table in a store that reminded me of the table that he and I had at home. I began crying while looking at it. Like the table at home, the one in the store had two drawers. I could not remember which of the drawers was his, the one on the left or the one on the right. I felt very sad, because I realized how long I had lived without him. I was looking at the table, when I envisioned hard black protuberances emanating from it and criss-crossing my body. I imagined the protuberances blending with my body, and my body turning into the material until the table and I were both unrecognizable.

Since this has happened, I can feel that he visits me when I cannot see him. These protuberances emanating from my body now hurt the one who is meant to sleep by my side.

Nalani L. Williams

My impulses as an artist are to expose the unseen and the abandoned aspects of the body and architectural structures. By creating spaces that take on these aspects themselves, I intervene in the architectural elements of the gallery, often turning the gallery itself into an organic body that is raw, wounded or decaying.



Welcome, 2008 Durational installation: Day 4



Welcome (interior detail), 2008
Durational installation: Day 4

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my gratitude to Professor Anita Moskowitz, Chair of the Department of Art; Associate Professor Stephanie Dinkins, MFA Program Director; Professor Howardena Pindell; and Associate Professor Christa Erickson for their assistance with this exhibition.

The 2008-2009 University Art Gallery exhibition schedule is made possible by a generous grant from the Paul W. Zuccaire Foundation. Additional funding for this exhibition has been provided by the Friends of Staller Center. We are extremely grateful to our sponsors for helping us present our exhibitions to our students and faculty as well as to the local and regional community.

I also want to express my appreciation to members of the Staller Center for the Arts staff: Pat Moran, Pete Pantaleo, and Christian Routh, for exhibition assistance; Kyle Dobbins, Tarran Hattan, Se Jin Hyun, Heather Larson, Lynn Liotta, Lindsay Litcher, and Alison Schumejda, Gallery Interns; Diane Heekyung Ahn, Allison Conley, and Sophia Dang, Gallery Assistants; Liz Silver, Staller Center Production Manager, Liz Lamendola, Technical Director, and the Staller Center Technical Crew for exhibition lighting; Amanda Meyers Wasserman, Staller Center Director of Development, for Gallery fundraising; and Barbara Schimmenti, Gallery Secretary.

Most of all, I wish to thank Austin Furtak-Cole, Alan Goodrich, Shannan Lee Hayes, Jin-kang Park, Verónica Peña, and Nalani L. Williams for a very exciting MFA exhibition.

Rhonda Cooper
Director

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www.stallercenter.com/gallery

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